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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY USSR (Komi ASSR)

REPORT

SUBJECT Oil Deposits Near Voy-Vozh

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report on oil deposits near Voy-Vozh (approximately N 62-50, E 54-45), Komi ASSR. The report contains a sketch and a legend of Voy-Vozh; and information on derricks, pipelines, inspection stations, use of natural gas as a fuel, and population statistics.

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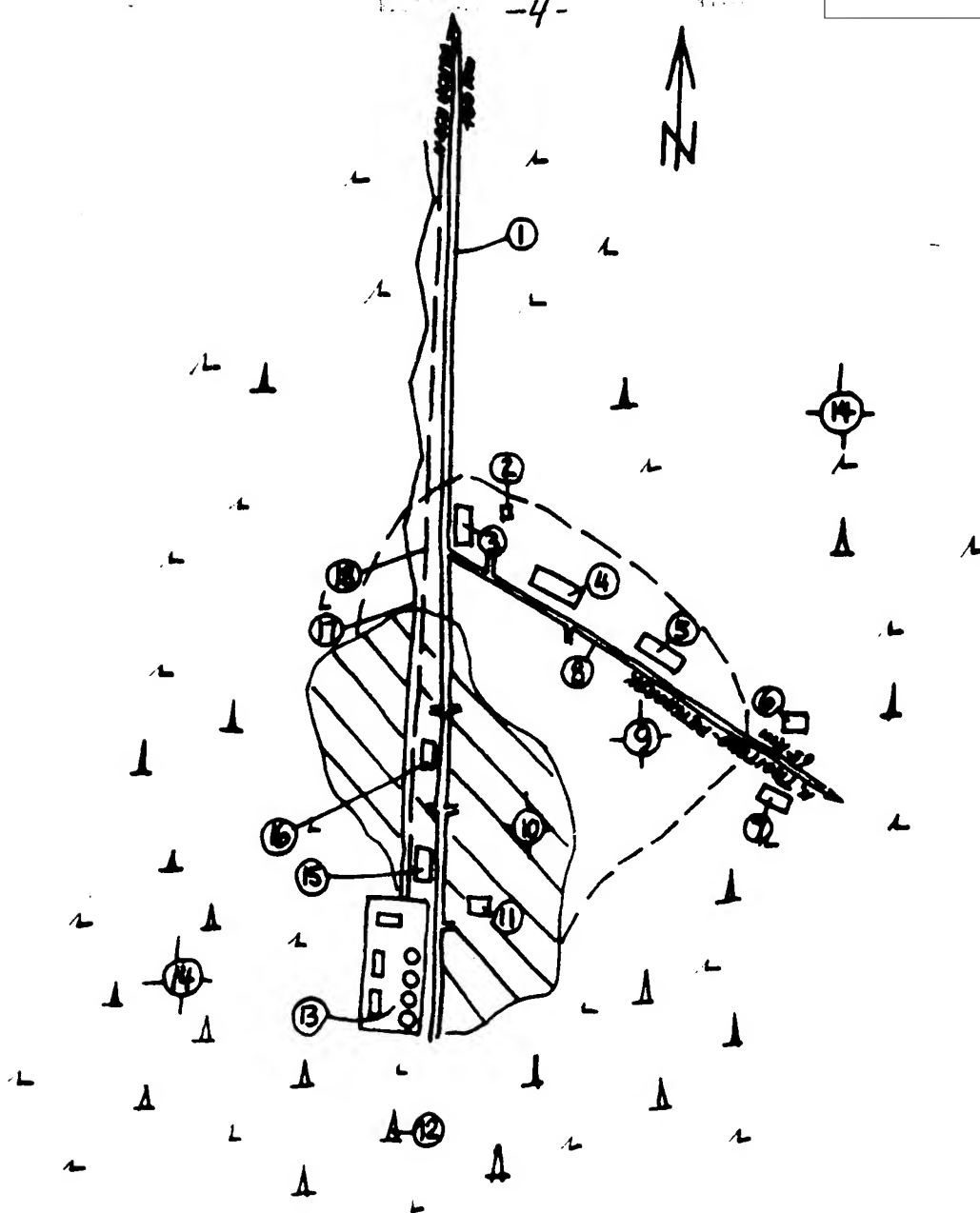
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EXPLOITATION OF THE OIL DEPOSITS AT VOI-VOZH [KOMI ASSR]

In January 1949, the area of Voi-Vozh was already being exploited to a great degree, and in the succeeding years the area was exploited even further. In August 1957, there were a total of 60 oil well derricks; 25 of these derricks were located in an inner circle having a radius of approximately 3 kilometers, and 35 derricks were in a wider circle having a radius of approximately 8 kilometers. Although there were some steel derricks, the majority were made of wood. Most of the oil wells were located in the area south of Voi-Vozh and had reached a depth of 900 meters. Plans had been made for the future -- possibly in 1958 -- to drill to a depth of 2,000 meters. On the basis of geological investigations, it was hoped that richer oil deposits would be found at this depth. The quality of the oil was good, although it was not good enough to be used as fuel in its crude state.

The oil which was produced was stored near the oil well derricks in small cylindrical expansion tanks. These tanks were placed in groups of two to four and were 3 meters in diameter and 4 meters high. From these storage tanks, the oil was pumped by compressors through a pipeline to the main storage depot located in the southern part of Voi-Vozh. The natural gas coming from these drillings was also pumped through pipelines to the main storage depot. A small amount of oil produced from the outlying oil wells was transported to the main storage depot by means of tank trucks.

The main storage depot was located in a cleared area measuring 200 by 100 meters and was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. Inside the enclosed area there were a number of one-story masonry buildings of unknown dimensions in which the repair workshops, the compressor installations, and the

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administration offices were located. In this area there were also 3 or 4 cylindrical metal tanks measuring about 12 meters in diameter and 5 meters in height, each having a conical top.

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All the oil in the main storage depot was pumped through a pipeline to Ukhta [Komi ASSR], located about 100 kilometers away. The pipeline ran about 2 meters below the surface of the earth along the west side of the road to Ukhta. The diameter of the pipeline was about 8 inches and the oil was pumped at a pressure of about 50 atmospheres.

About midway between Voi-Vozh and Ukhta there was an auxiliary compressor station, and inspection stations were located at intervals of approximately 10 kilometers along the pipeline. A Soviet family lived at each of these inspection stations; their task was to see whether the pressure and flow of oil remained constant. For this purpose there were pressure gauges with waste traps in which any sand or water in the oil was caught. These traps were about 2 meters high. All the inspection stations were equipped with telephones.

Part of the natural gas was used in Voi-Vozh as heating fuel, or for other purposes, while the rest was pumped from the main storage depot through a pipeline to Ukhta. Voi-Vozh had a complex pipeline system enabling every family to make use of the natural gas. It is necessary to mention that neither coal nor gasoline was available in Voi-Vozh and natural gas was used as fuel at the truck depot, where there were approximately 100-150 trucks of the SIS-151 type. The gas was used in its unpurified state.

The natural gas pipeline ran parallel to the oil pipeline along the western side of the road to Ukhta; it was suspended 1.5 meters above the surface of the earth and was supported at regular distances by wooden supports. Owing to the large temperature differences, the natural gas pipeline

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was laid in a zigzag pattern, not in a straight line. The extreme distance of the pipeline from the road was 25 meters over a length of 50 meters. The diameter of the natural gas pipeline was about 6 inches, and the pressure used to pump the gas through the line was about 70-80 atmospheres.

Voi-Vozh did not have any facilities to process the oil, and no plans for such facilities were apparent at the time of reporting. The nearest refinery was in Ukhta.

Today, Voi-Vozh has 6,000 inhabitants, most of whom work in the oil or natural gas industry. Others are employed in the repair workshops, sawmills, and motor vehicle shops. Before 1954, most of the inhabitants lived in camps. After the camps were abolished in 1954, they were forced to settle in Voi-Vozh. Their freedom of movement is restricted to the area of Voi-Vozh; and travel outside of this area must first be approved by the MVD. Of the 6,000 inhabitants, about 75 percent are Great Russians and the remaining 25 percent are of such nationalities as Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Volga-Germans.

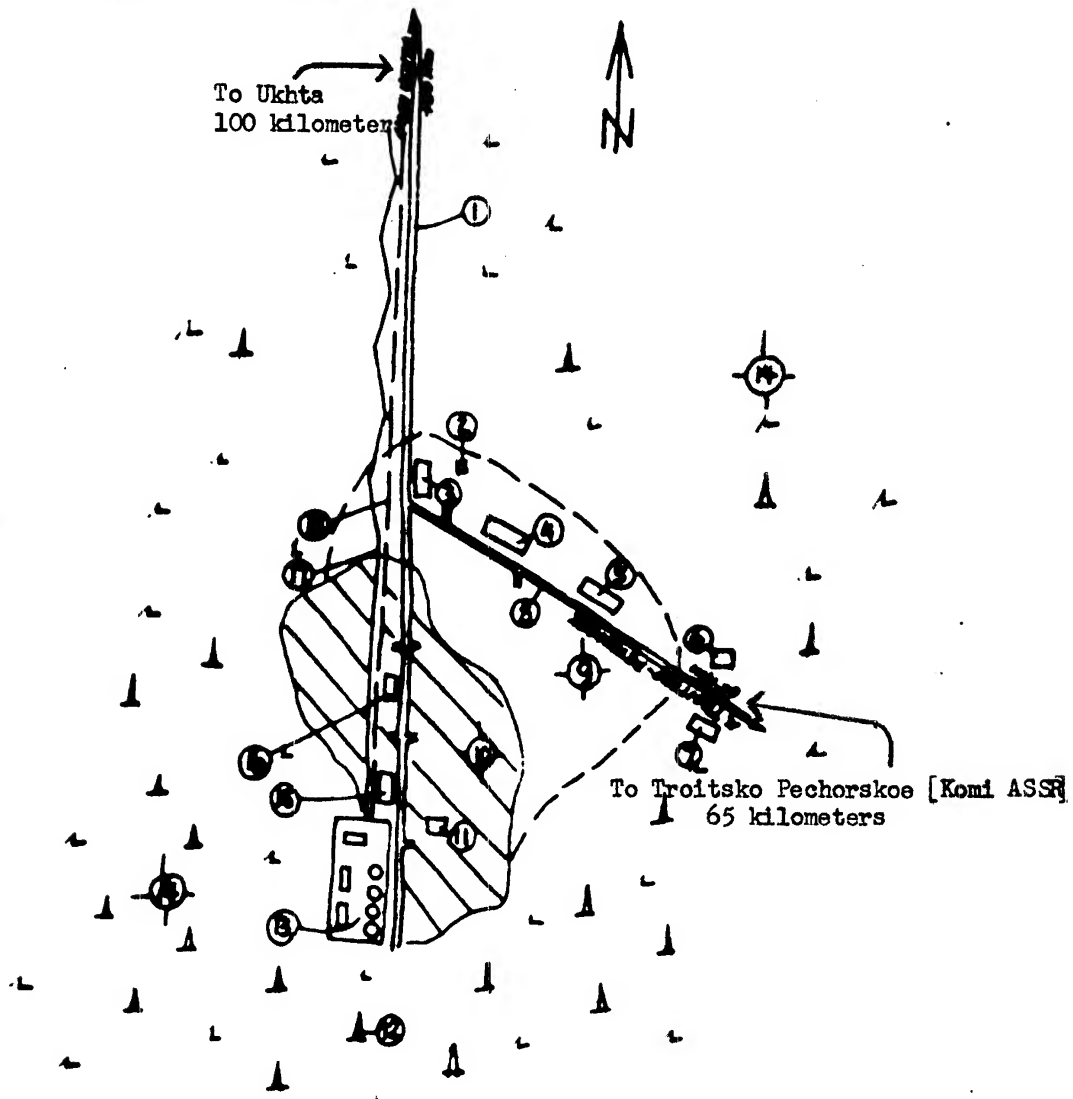
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Situation as of August 1957



- 14 -

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Legend

1. Road leading to Ukhta, located about 100 kilometers north of Voi-Vozh. Since there is no railroad leading to Voi-Vozh, this road is the only connection with Voi-Vozh. The foundation of the road consists of logs laid side by side. In the past, the road has been covered several times with gravel and tar. Owing to the severe freezing temperature and its heavy use, the road constantly needs repairs.
2. Warehouse, built of masonry and measuring 10 x 8 x 4 meters.
3. Motor vehicle repair shop, built of masonry and measuring 30 x 10 x 6 meters. This shop was in charge of the maintenance of the motor vehicle pool, which contained between 100 and 150 vehicles under the jurisdiction of the Voi-Vozh administration. All these vehicles used natural gas as fuel.
4. Spare parts warehouse, measuring 15 x 8 x 8 meters. All kinds of parts required for drilling oil were stored here.
5. Compressor station, built of masonry and measuring 25 x 8 x 6 meters.
At this place gas bottles were filled with natural gas to be used as fuel for the motor vehicles.
6. Gas distribution station, built of brick and measuring 6 x 6 x 5 meters.
7. Sawmill.
8. Road leading to Troitsko-Pechorskoe. This road was built in the same manner as the road [to Ukhta] indicated at point 1.

- 5 -
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9. Area of Voi-Vozh planned for future exploitation.
10. The village of Voi-Vozh. This village consists mostly of the typical Russian wooden houses. During the past few years, eight or ten modern three-story brick buildings were built in the eastern part of Voi-Vozh. These buildings measure 25 x 12 x 10 meters and are used chiefly as housing for officials. All the houses are heated by means of natural gas.
11. Main warehouse, built of masonry and measuring 30 x 25 x 10 meters.
12. Oil well derricks. It was estimated that there were about 60 derricks in the area around Voi-Vozh. Most of the oil well derricks were located south of Voi-Vozh.
13. Main oil storage depot. Inside the fenced-in area there were three or four cylindrical storage tanks, which were 12 meters in diameter and 12 meters high, having a conical top. There were also a number of masonry buildings.
14. Woods. Voi-Vozh was located in a vast wooded area. Since the trees were not in a healthy condition, they only reached a diameter of 15 centimeters at a height of 10 to 12 meters.
15. Administration building. Built of masonry and measuring 15 x 8 x 8 meters.
16. Office building of the MVD. Built of wood and measuring 20 x 8 x 7 meters. [] the total number of MVD members at 200 persons; they were armed with automatic pistols and carbines.

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- 6 -

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17. Natural gas pipeline. The diameter was 6 inches and the pipeline was located 1.5 meters above the surface of the earth.
18. Pipeline. The diameter was 8 inches and was the pipeline located 2 meters below the surface of the earth.

- 7 -
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